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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOREST SERVICE

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Southern Forest Experiment Station

**Facts
About the Forest Survey
of the
Southern Pine
and Hardwoods
Regions**



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Facts About the Survey

What is the Forest Survey?

The "enabling act" of the Forest Survey is section 9 of the McSweeney-McNary Act of 1928, which provides:

"That the Secretary of Agriculture is hereby authorized and directed, under such plans as he may determine to be fair and equitable, to cooperate with appropriate officials of each State of the United States, and either through them or directly with private and other agencies, in making a comprehensive survey of the present and prospective requirements for timber and other forest products in the United States, and of timber supplies, including a determination of the present and potential productivity of forest land therein, and of such other facts as may be necessary in the determination of ways and means to balance the timber budget of the United States. There is hereby authorized to be appropriated annually, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, not more than \$250,000: *Provided*, That the total appropriation of Federal funds under this section shall not exceed \$3,000,000."

The Forest Survey is aiming at an accurate picture of the forest situation, without reference to hitherto published figures, forecasts, or theories, public or private. When secured the results will be available to all.

What major facts will the survey secure?

1. The area of each type of forest cover and the estimated stand by species. Volumes will be expressed in both board feet and cubic feet. Regrowth conditions on cut-over and burned lands will be determined.

2. Rate of depletion by cutting, fire, insects, disease, floods, and any other factors.

3. Growth rates in old stands and on restocking areas and probable future timber yields.

4. Present national and local requirements in forest products and probable trends in use of wood.

How will the timber inventory be obtained?

By a combination of compiling existing reliable data where they are available, running survey and cruise lines, and interpreting aerial photographs and maps made from them by the Army engineers and others. In the bottomland hardwoods there is such a diversity of conditions and such a scarcity of adequate records that it will be necessary to carry on an extensive cruise with strips at wide intervals and plots along these strips. A similar procedure may be followed for the pine region unless further investigation indicates that a compilation method, based on existing data, can be relied upon.

What geographic unit will be used in presenting the findings of the survey?

Since the study is an economic one, the aim will be to present the facts as largely as possible by economic units such as the major timber regions, logical forest industry regions, States, etc. Units will be selected designed to make the survey data of the greatest possible economic value, both locally and nationally.

Will the estimates segregate special products?

Yes, as far as practicable figures will be secured on the quantity of special products of both general and local importance, such as stave bolts, naval stores, etc.

What information will be secured on consumption of wood?

In cooperation with the Census and other statistical organizations, figures will be secured

on the consumption of wood in the different wood-using categories, such as the manufacturing industries, using wood as a raw product, the railroads, mines, urban and rural construction, pulp and paper plants, fuel wood, etc.

How will future trends in wood use be determined?

Frequent censuses will be taken of wood consumption in the major categories which, with past figures, will furnish curves showing trends to date. In addition systematic inquiries will be made in each of the principal wood-using classes to discover whether more or less wood is now being used than formerly and the reasons therefor, which will give a reasonable indication of future trends.

Will the funds appropriated for the survey be spread evenly over the whole forest area of the United States?

No, the money will be distributed in proportion to the difficulty and importance of the region. This is the second region to be studied.

How long will the survey take?

For the entire United States the authorization bill contemplates at least 12 years. It is hoped this time may be materially shortened.

Will regional reports be issued as soon as a region is completed?

Yes.

Will statistical data be kept up to date during the life of the survey?

Yes, just as far as practicable. For example, when the region is completed and a regional report is published, the areas cut over during the progress of the survey will be added to the cut-over areas found at the start and the timber cut will be subtracted from the volume data as first collected.

What value will the survey have for the local communities in forest regions?

It will furnish facts as to the timber and forest land resources underlying community stability, and suggest ways to promote permanent stability. It will furnish facts bearing directly on the need for and adequacy of river and harbor improvements and land transportation facilities.

What value will the survey have for the forest-land States?

It will furnish reliable data on the forest resources of the State. It will throw additional light on the part the State should play in forest-land ownership; on the problems of forest land taxation and cooperation in forest protection; on the factors directly affecting the prosperity and stability of forest industry communities within the State.

What value will the survey have for the Nation as a whole?

It will give the most nearly complete picture of the nation-wide forest land and timber supply situation ever presented. The facts thus made available will have a direct bearing on national policies and legislation affecting cooperation in forest protection, planting, research, etc., with States and private owners, Federal forest land acquisition, etc. Light will be thrown on the question of whether or not there is any danger of a national timber famine. It will do much to make the general public "forest-minded" in the broadest sense.

What value will the survey have for the timber industry?

It will furnish facts badly needed by the lumber industry for the consideration of many of its own problems—market extension movements, mergers, reorganization, consolidation of land holdings for sustained yield opera-

tion, regional timber resources back of existing wood manufacturing centers, extent and location of timber resources in competing regions, etc.

It will likewise furnish badly needed information on which to base public policies and legislative programs directly affecting the timber industry, such as forest land tax reform, cooperation in forest protection, etc. It should materially help the public to become forest minded.

What value will the survey have for the consumers of wood?

It will furnish facts as to the extent and location of remaining supplies and future yield probabilities of various species and qualities used by the principal wood-using categories—the railroads, automobile makers, mines, paper mills, building construction agencies, wood-products manufacturing industries, etc.

What value will the survey have for the farmer?

The farmer as a large consumer of lumber will learn about the location, extent, and character of his future lumber supply. As a large owner of forest land (nearly one-third of the Nation's forest land owned by farmers as woodlots) he will profit by data on the future outlets for the surplus products of his woodlot.

What value will the survey have for the railroads?

It will furnish them much-needed data on the extent of forest resources back of forest-industry communities they now serve, probabilities as to future forest products tonnage, soundness of extension programs in forest regions, etc.

Why should the private owner allow access to his cruise records?

A true picture of the forest situation in the various forest regions of the United States has

long been sought by the timber industry, by the users of wood, and by the public agencies dealing with forestry and industrial matters. A reliable set of facts is badly needed to furnish a sound basis for (1) developing further cooperation between timber owners and the public in protection of forests from fire, insects, and disease; (2) public and legislative consideration of such matters as forest land tax revision; (3) properly directed wood marketing campaigns; (4) Federal and State forest land acquisition and land exchange programs; and many other matters of similar import. A complete impartial assembly and presentation of the facts is the surest and quickest means to bring closer together the divergent views as to what the forest problem is and what to do about it. The private owner often has the most accurate records. The more nearly accurate the picture is drawn, the more useful the results to all concerned. It is good business and good policy for the private owner to cooperate fully in achieving accuracy.

Will private cruises be kept confidential?

The private cruise figures will be kept absolutely confidential for use only within the Forest Service. They will be released only in such combination with other ownerships as to safeguard their confidential character and not reveal the identity of individual holdings.

Where can additional information be secured about the Forest Survey?

From the director, Southern Forest Experiment Station, 600 Stern Building, 348 Baronne Street, New Orleans, La.

E. L. DEMMON,
*Director Southern Forest
Experiment Station.*

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